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BOOK REVIEWS.

EUGENE UNTERMYER, *Editor-in-Charge.*

HANDBOOK OF THE LAW OF BILLS AND NOTES. By CHARLES P. NORTON. Fourth Edition, with an Appendix containing the Negotiable Instruments Law. St. Paul: WEST PUBLISHING Co. 1914. pp. x, 732.

The present edition of this well-known child of the Hornbook family meets with little but approbation. The average revision of a legal text book presents a certain incoherency of treatment, due, perhaps, to a desire on the part of its editors to include the greatest number of cases presenting the greatest possible combinations of circumstances, without much regard to their logical position. That these revisors have not adopted this all too prevalent failing is partly shown by the inappreciable increase in size over former editions. This is perhaps due in a large measure to the Negotiable Instruments Law, now in force in forty-seven States and Territories, which has rendered a number of judicial decisions obsolete. That statute is not, however, an entirely harmonious mechanism, and Norton has not neglected to supply recent cases giving the judicial interpretation which is always necessary to supplement an attempted codification. The black letter headings are handy for review, the text supplies the theory, and the exhaustive foot-notes will furnish a useful basis for the composition of a brief.

LAW DICTIONARY AND CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA. BY JOHN BOUVIER. Third Revision, being the Eighth Edition, by FRANCIS RAWLE. Kansas City: VERNON LAW BOOK Co.; St. Paul: WEST PUBLISHING Co. 1914. pp. Vol. I, xviii, 1-1174; Vol. II, 1175-2284; Vol. III, 2285-3504.

This well-known law dictionary has not been enlarged in bulk, since the present revision consists of three thin volumes as against the two thick books which comprised the last edition. The actual contents have, however, been much increased, and the revision appears to have been very exhaustive. The increase in the amount of material is attributable to the immense volume of judicial opinion and interpretation which has appeared since the last revision, that of 1897. It is, of course, necessary to give weight to the law which has been evolved in this period, in order to bring a Law Dictionary up to date. But the editors seem to have fallen into the one error of continued reiteration and voluminous citation, which is incompatible with the strict functions of a Dictionary. To obviate this inconsistency, the present revision has been published as a "Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia," as the title shows. The work as finally analyzed, combines the features of an elementary encyclopedia, an exhaustive dictionary, a glossary of legal terms, and a brief commentary on American systems of government. Mr. Francis Rawle, who has edited the present revision as well as the two preceding, admits an attempt on his part to incorporate the encyclopediac feature into the work, and it is not denied that his efforts in that direction have been eminently successful.

The value of this work cannot be doubted. It was originally compiled by a jurist of recognized ability, and the successive revisions have been conducted under the auspices of men famed in the annals of the law. It was the first American dictionary of any importance, and still remains the foremost work in that line of literary endeavor.